



## *City of Pass Christian*

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*Leo "Chipper" McDermott, Mayor*

November 2, 2011

Mr. Julius Genachowski, Chairman  
Federal Communications Commission  
445 12<sup>th</sup> Street, SW  
Washington, DC 20554

Dear Chairman Genachowski:

As mayor of a Gulf Coast city that would benefit from continued improvement to broadband Infrastructure, I strongly support the proposed merger of AT&T and T-Mobile USA. This merger, which is now under review by your agency, would strengthen the economy and enhance public safety in our area by providing rural Mississippi with expanded access to high-speed broadband technology.


As proposed, the AT&T and T-Mobile merger would provide \$\* billion in private sector funding for improvements and additional to telecommunication infrastructure. As a result of this investment, AT&T's 4G wireless technology would be available to an additional 55 million Americans. Expanding access to broadband is a top priority for Mississippi, as our state currently ranks just 39<sup>th</sup> in broadband speed and 44<sup>th</sup> in wireless accessibility according to the National Broadband Map.

This merger would provide the Gulf region with expanded access to AT&T's high-speed 4G wireless network. Improving accessibility will be of significant benefit to citizens of the city of Pass Christian, many of whom are still in the process of rebuilding after the devastation of Katrina. Improved broadband access will help us attract new business and bring new jobs to the area. In addition, improved wireless service would make area even more attractive to the tourists who visit our scenic shoreline, golf courses, museums, restaurants, resorts and other attractions.

Most importantly, the merger would provide our area with a more resilient telecommunication Infrastructure that would enhance the safety of the public in times of emergency. Given our experiences with Hurricane Katrina and Camille before that, we know firsthand how important it is for citizens and emergency responders to have a reliable form of mobile communication. High-speed wireless service is especially important during time of evacuation, as it enables citizens on the move to stay in close touch with family members and receive up-to-the-minute information on road closures and evacuation routes. Access to wireless broadband networks in an emergency is an particularly importance for the public safety agencies in our area working to keep citizens safe and well-informed.

The AT&T merger is a great opportunity to encourage the private-sector investment needed to bring high-speed wireless service to over 97% of the US population. I believe this investment will benefit our Community and I therefore urge the commission to support the proposed merger.

Sincerely,

  
Chip McDermott, Mayor  
City of Pass Christian, Mississippi